

SPEECH

OF

COL. JOHN H. SAVAGE,

OF TENNESSEE,

ON THE

SLAVERY QUESTION.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 13, 1850.

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STATION

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PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

COL. JOHN H. SAVAGE

IN THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

1860

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COL. JOHN H. SAVAGE, OF TENNESSEE,

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DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 13, 1850.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, on the President's Message transmitting the Constitution of California, Mr. SAVAGE said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have sought the floor, not that I expected to interest the committee. My object has been to speak my individual sentiments, as a pledge of my future conduct. Like many others who have preceded me, I feel that the times are pregnant with consequences—our acts may become volumes of evil history. If we act without wisdom posterity will forever mourn our folly. "The last resort a man has recourse to in the government of himself, is his understanding." I see no reason why the nation should not follow the example. When Cataline conspired for the destruction of Rome, a main feature in his plan was, freedom to the slaves and servile war; when George the Third consulted for the subjugation of America, one of the elements of our destruction was, an insurrection of our slaves. It is our duty to-day, to see that modern abolition shall meet a similar fate.

During this debate we heard much of the army and navy, of civil and servile war, of fancied battles for the mouth of the Mississippi, of southern chivalry and northern conscience and power. All this has served but to excite us—to arouse our passions, and drive away our reason; to inflame our people, and alienate their affections; and, in the end to produce the very consequences so horribly depicted. If I had time, I should reply to most of this stuff as it deserves; for well I know that certain gentlemen who threaten us with civil and servile war—with the drum and the life upon our plantations, will, when that sad hour shall come, as the bitter fruit of this overshadowing tempest of sectional madness, be very far distant from the scene of danger.

But to prevent misunderstanding I wish to say, that I have the highest regard for the mass of our northern brethren—they may have their Catalines and their Arnolds among them—as I fear we have too—but there are also the good, the brave, the patriotic—men in whose bosoms there is neither North nor South, East nor West, whose affections, like the light of Heaven, spread over all the land. From this class of men,

constituting, as I believe, a large majority of the Democratic party, who have been true to the Constitution under all circumstances, I will never separate, but will go down with them to a common grave or save the country. Nor ought I here to pass in silence my appreciation of the gentleman from Indiana, (Colonel GORMAN.) I have long regarded him as a gallant soldier, one who had sought danger in every form for his country's glory. But here, he has shown a courage and won a laurel above the battle-field. He was the first northern man to meet this northern current and defend the right. Other gentlemen from this side of the chamber have nobly followed him, and to them all I am proud to offer whatever of kindness and gratitude I am capable of feeling. But such as they are, are not all our northern brethren. A change has come over many, who now hate us and love our slaves—who speak all manner of evil of us for the negro's sake. It is with these men that I war, and I will vindicate my people from their vile aspersions. One of their charges—than which a baser and falser one could not be uttered—is, that the southern people are untrue to the Union.

I know the idea has been thrust upon us that this Union can be peaceably dissolved. Indeed, such petitions have been often presented to this House; but never from the South. Even now, every mail brings us northern speeches, tracts, and petitions against the Union. Who pays for printing and writing them I know not; but I do know that England and the monarchs of the Old World might spend millions profitably in this way, if it be true that while we exist their crowns are not safe. But we are not compelled to refer alone to speeches and petitions. Nearly every page of your journal furnishes evidence of this spirit. At the second session of the twenty-seventh Congress, in 1841, the single State of Massachusetts presented thirty-seven petitions against the admission of slave States, six against Texas, fifteen for an amendment of the Constitution so as to absolve the free States from all obligation on account of slavery, and five for a dissolution of the Union; certain citizens of Boston prayed for "an amicable division of the United States by running a line between the free and the slave States." *Where then slept* the chivalry of the gallant gentleman from Illinois, (Colonel BISSELL,) with his thirty-six regiments, while disunion thus assailed the very foundations of our liberties? I have been shocked by these sentiments, and have felt that if this could be the feeling of this age, I for one am here at the wrong time. For myself, I accept no such terms. Had I the power to make and write the history of the world, after the fall of these States, I would write the bloodiest page of all recorded time. A peaceable dissolution would not only be ruin but dishonor—a cloud upon the glories of the past. The future historian would record, not simply that we had lost our liberties, but that we were unworthy of freedom. I will not *argue* that "dissolution and war are identical." I should be for war. If we cannot live honorably, we may die gloriously, and build up with our bones a monument that in all future ages shall rear itself upon the gloomy pages of the history of nations—a magnificent though mournful example to warn a more fortunate people from the paths of our folly. With nations as with men, many may live well; few die nobly. Life is short—even the life of nations; and I would say to those who will the death of this Republic, (if any there be,) if it must perish

give it a glorious tomb. Let its memory be immortal. The people of Tennessee love the Union. They remember who exhorted us to speak of the Union as "the palladium of our safety and prosperity." They know who used the words, "at every hazard, and by every sacrifice, this Union must be preserved." Nor have we forgotten the language of the late President, "No treason to mankind, since the organization of society, would be equal to that of him who would lift his hand to destroy it." The gentleman from North Carolina, (Mr. STANLY,) had no cause to shed his *crocodile* tears over the graves of Jackson and Polk. Neither domestic traitor, nor foreign foe, will ever plant a standard there. We will give every soldier, every dollar, every blade of grass, for the Union as our fathers made it; but not one tittle of our rights or honor shall be wrested from us in the name of the Union by a violation of that Constitution which made the Union. We remember who said "we must preserve our liberties or perish in the last ditch," and I for one will profit by the advice.

There has been much senseless talk about a Nashville Convention. I heard the same vile, false cry in 1844, and denounced it then, as I now do, as the basest slander, uttered for the vilest purpose; and while I have no desire to become a modern *Don Quixote*, to fight every "wind-mill" that may chance to have a seat here, yet I am not very particular, if those gentlemen who have been so liberal in charging treason upon others, shall understand what I say as personal to themselves. "Our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor," have been pledged many years to the maintenance of the principles of our Revolution. I am ready to war with internal traitors or foreign enemies; but believing that nothing less than some dire and overpowering necessity, which strikes at existence itself, can ever drive the people of the South out of the Union, I am not prepared to denounce as traitors those who may attend the Nashville Convention. Fred. Douglas, Mr. Greely, and other free negroes of the North, can meet, denounce the Union, proclaim freedom to our slaves, and war upon our people, and the *patriotism* of the "*White House*" slumbers; but if the white, the good, the brave, the patriotic, assemble to consult of their dearest rights, it is treason, and they are threatened with "the army and navy." I cannot understand the distinction, although the President and his advisers may clearly see it. Why may not white men assemble as well as negroes? I suppose they intend to save and not dissolve the Union. They may advise the people of the South to stay at home, and build up manufactures, until their northern brethren come to their senses. They may advise the southern people to have but one political party; to beware of "Allison" letters in future, and vote for no man whose opinions, when President, "are neither important nor necessary," and who will not pledge himself, by a prompt exercise of the veto power, to protect them from all usurpations on the part of Congress. If they should do this, I am not prepared to say it would be wrong—I believe it would be right; but if they should assume to themselves to dissolve the Union, I shall be ready to oppose them by all the means that God and nature may put into my hands. But I will trust the South, and so will my constituents. I live not in a city where (southern) Whigs prevail, but in the mountains, where Democracy is triumphant. No southern name has yet been written traitor

in our history, and never will be. Your attempted injustice, your vile aspersions, will wholly fail to drive us from our rights or our propriety. Your wild schemes of emancipation, your foolish threats of subjugation and conquest, of which you ought to be ashamed, are worse than idle songs, sung by idiots. We will laugh to scorn all your madness. It is said, "some men are born great, some acquire greatness, others have greatness thrust upon them." The South, sir, was born great; she has, in some degree, acquired greatness; and now your impotent malice is thrusting more greatness upon her. You may call us aristocrats, lords of the lash, and such other epithets as low instinct may suggest. A few short years, any you will call us lords of the loom, and set you down and weep over your past folly and departed greatness. You must be content to see these hated slaveholders the most powerful, prosperous, and happy people on the face of God's globe; and withal, still loving the Union, and treating justly their northern brethren.

Sir, our States will not pass laws in violation of the Constitution. Our citizens will not secrete, drive off, or refuse to give up your property. We will not claim for ourselves all the territories. We will not denounce you as violators of the laws of God and man—as tyrants, despots, and evil men, whom all the just hold in utter scorn, and upon whom the wrath of God, long delayed, would soon fall in destroying vengeance.

We will not declare that in your bosom is an odious malady—a moral and physical cancer—and that our power shall confine you until it eats out your vitals. We will not tell you that beneath your homes is "imbedded" a dark "rebellious material" that "laughs at fire," and that our efforts shall not cease until a match is lighted which shall shake the continent, and blast, in one wild explosion, all that is dear to you. We will not propose to make you the equal of slaves. We will not refuse to set with you at God's appointed feast, and drink together the cup which our Redeemer left. No, sir. In all these things—in nothing will we offend against you. Unlike you, who, in the pride of your supposed power, have assumed to yourselves infallibility, as did the Romish church in days gone by, and have put your hands upon our hearts and rudely wrenched the cords of our vitality; and when the sufferer, in his anguish, has cried out, like true workers, for "*God and conscience*," your anger has but increased as the life and strength of your victim has been exhausted, until charging regiments, civil and servile war, have become spectacles sweet and lovely.

Sir, I do not charge that such are the sentiments of all the North. There are high and honorable exceptions, and many; and should it be a part of the providence of God that this proud Republic shall perish in consequence of this unhallowed strife, future ages will admire many names of the North, and will compare their patriotic efforts to save the country with that selfish spirit that now sits by, in utter ignorance or cold indifference, content to see your Capitol burnt to the ground, "so he but roasts his egg."

I will say no more about the Union, and only a word of the Constitution. They are two often confounded, although different things. The Constitution made the Union. It is the pedestal upon which this column of thirty States rears itself—a united pillar of strength and safety. Destroy this foundation, and the mighty structure of the Union, consecra-

ted as it is by the blood and toils of our revolutionary sires, falls and crumbles into ruins, carrying down forever the glories of the past and the hopes of the future. Indeed, the Union, without the Constitution, ought to fall. It would be a curse, and not a blessing; a grand consolidated despotism, each hour producing some vile monster—some Robespierre—some Santa Anna, to disgrace mankind, and murder innocence. We would soon hail with joy the coming of some Cæsar or Napoleon to deliver us from petty tyrants.

We, the people of the South, look to this instrument alone for safety from the ills that are threatened us. We see in it a glorious spectacle, above the sea of factious passions, as the rocks upon our shores an unshak- en barrier, upon which every wave of lawless violence shall break in harmless fury.

My mind recurs to two great eras in the past. A time was, before the creation of the sun, when the world was veiled in night. The light was scattered abroad upon the universe. God collected it, and placed it in the firmanent to rule the day. So, at the close of our revolutionary struggle, shadows, clouds, and darkness, hung around our destiny. The wisdom of our fathers collected the scattered fires of liberty, embodied them in our onstitution, and placed it high in the political horizon. Like the work of God's own hand, it may have its dark spots; still, with all its blemishes, it is the most brilliant light that yet has rose on time. It has been hailed by the wise men as the coming of a good angel in a dark hour, to lead man up to the original glories of his creation. Sir, I am content to live under it—to die with it. Than this, I ask no more; and I am sure I will accept no less.

The gentleman from North Carolina, (Mr. STANLY,) and others, have spoken of party; and I will speak plainly upon this subject. In doing this, it is necessary to notice the two great parties as they now exist; the parts they have borne and are now acting in this grand drama, of negro emancipation; for, whatever may be the result, they alone are responsible—they are the heroes of the stage. The Abolitionists and Free-Soil- ers, though terrible indeed, have no other place in the scene than that of those spies, assassins, and incendiaries, sometimes employed by bad princes to get the better of more honorable adversaries. And while I decline, on the present occasion, an extended discussion of those princi- ples which constitute the creed of my political faith, I will say that each hour in the history of the past has but strengthened my belief; and I now feel—that not only all the South, but every patriot in the land, ought to rally around the standard of those principles which alone can save us from the deep destruction threatened by the policy of the party in power, who now propose to settle this question by leaving it open—to promote civil liberty in our territories by a continuance of military gov- ernment.

Concurring causes have produced our present danger; but that which rises high above the rest in the scale of evil, is found in the late Presi- dential election. Every man in the South, who voted for General Tay- lor, voted to exclude slavery from the territories by the Wilmot proviso, that being a *domestic* question, “settled by the various departments” of the Government, acquiesced in by the people, and upon which legislation could not well be “hasty.” General Taylor intended the North should

so understand his letter. It was the folly of the South that she was deceived. If Cass had been elected, the proviso would have been harmless—the agitators powerless.* California would now be under the protection of Congress, and not the pupil of King. The Administration would not now be making false charges against their predecessors, to escape the odium of their blunders.

It is not true that Mr. Polk recommended the policy pursued by the present Executive. He recommended territorial governments, and only claimed power to preserve and protect the very territories which General Taylor is now forming into States.† I have no time to notice this matter further than to say, that I consider *the territorial policy* of the present Executive a lawless interference with the rights of the people there, and the action of Congress here, “unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun,” and which might have “been avoided without the loss of national honor.”

At the commencement of this session, the representation upon this floor is supposed to have stood 116 Democrats, 114 Whigs—counting in their respective Free-Soilers. Since then a change of one has occurred, and it may now stand 117 Democrats, 113 Whigs. Of the Whigs 29 are South, 84 North; of the Democrats, 62 are South, 55 North. In the Presidential election of 1844, Polk, Dallas, and Texas received in the North 106 votes, in the South 64; Messrs. Clay and Frelinghuysen received 58 votes in the North and 47 in the South. The annexation of Texas has raised a northern Whig tempest, which has swept away near half our Democratic friends, and threatens soon to leave not one behind. These facts point the South to her remedy. There is no need of arms, if we will vote right. But we are divided. Of southern men, some are openly against us—such as the gentleman from North Carolina, (Mr. STANLY.) Nor can I trust fully all those who seem to be with us—to save their places they now fly with the southern whirlwind; when it is over they will again set their sails to the northern tempest.

Gentlemen will pardon me: Some of you have not given me such evidence of your change as I could desire. You voted against the South in 1848, that could be forgiven, you may have been deceived; but why should the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CONRAD)‡ abuse the Democracy for the acquisition of this territory? If it really be worthless, let

* Mr. CONRAD, a Whig member from Louisiana, in his speech, (28th February, 1850,) speaking of General Cass's course upon the slavery question, said: “I differ from that gentleman in many important questions, but I take this opportunity to declare that, for the independent stand he has taken on this question, and the ability with which he has maintained it, he deserves the gratitude and respect, not of the South only, but of every friend of the Union.”

† Mr. Polk, in his last annual message, says: “The existing condition of California, and that part of New Mexico lying west of the Rio Grande and without the limits of Texas, imperiously demand that Congress should at its present session organize territorial governments over them. Impressed with the necessity of establishing territorial governments over them, I recommended the subject to the favorable consideration of Congress in my message communicating the ratified treaty of peace. Congress adjourned without making any provision for their government. Since then, the very limited power possessed by the Executive has been exercised to preserve and protect them from the inevitable consequences of anarchy.”

‡ In his speech in the House, February 28, 1850, he said:

“I now say that I would willingly give Mexico twice as much to take back the country as it cost us.”

our northern brethren have it all. I love them much better than the Mexicans. At any rate, do not require us to believe that you are the best possible defenders of southern interests to a territory whose acquisition you now affect to deplore as a great national calamity. Besides, your position is somewhat unfortunate for your professions—you are in combination with a powerful party in the North, whose popularity at home is based upon deep hostility to southern interests. So far as I can see, you are in the daily habit of supporting that party by your votes, notwithstanding your mighty speeches.

Sir, it cannot be denied that northern Whiggery, under the auspices of the late Ex-President Adams, has long been kindling a mighty fire, which is now consuming this Republic. This territorial question is the fuel that to-day sends the hissing flame to the heavens. Settle this, and the blaze is extinguished forever—the Republic is saved. Who says “keep it open?” the President and his party—and for why? It can only be that northern Whigs may still have it to agitate upon, that the South may be threatened with the army and navy, and the whole country forced this time, as fraud will no longer avail, to elect a southern man with northern principles.

Sir, I do not desire to do the President injustice; he is a great man, some have thought perhaps the greatest lover of office in the universe; he is also a distinguished warrior, and has promised us to follow “the practice of the earlier Presidents.” And so are all his Cabinet distinguished gentlemen; and that the whole country may have a rule by which to appreciate them, I present one drawn by Lord Brougham in his lives of eminent statesmen. Says this writer:

“Jefferson made it a rule never to remove an adversary because his own partisans required it; never to retain one because his enemies threatened him; he who is seduced or deterred from his duty does not rule; but obey; he *pretends* to guide when he slavishly follows; he would be understood to act for himself while he is a tool in the hands of others; he meanly undertakes the responsibility for the sake of the patronage, they dictating his course, while they skulk in the dark.”

I also desire to treat northern Whigs with perfect fairness. I confess that I believe that some of them would now gladly escape from the dark pestiferous cloud which party tactics have raised around them; but alas! how powerless. The great Massachusetts Senator is daring and patriotic; he makes a mighty effort to do justice and save the Republic. With great boldness and magnanimity he has told us that he would have nothing *more* to do with the Wilmot proviso, *because* he did not need it; that the laws of God, the policy of the President, and the California proviso, had killed us so dead that he would not condescend to strike us. And nobly does this lion frown down the vile jackalls of his party—those Mexican lancers following the Whig camp to gather the spoils, murder the wounded, and mutilate the dead; and well have we thanked him for it—we have thrown up our caps and shouted glory to “the God-like,” glad to know that even in death his spear would not pursue us. “How fallen,” how melancholy yet how true is this picture. Gentlemen may hide their eyes from it, but it is as palpable as air. I feel it; I breathe it. The South is degraded; the sword of power has been hung up between her and the territories, like the sword of God before the gates of Paradise, to forever bar our entrance. And all this has been adjudged against us because of the sin of slavery. Live on, ye submissionists, ye

degenerate sons of gallant sires, forever if you may, in your infamy. I envy you not, but I have a life which at all times, under the providence of God, I shall be ready to dedicate to the cause of justice and freedom. For me no confinement but the Constitution or the coffin, is the doctrine for which I will live and die. I do not say these things to excite myself or any one else ; I desire to settle this question fairly if we can ; if not my policy shall be to oppose your encroachments here calmly, firmly, fearlessly, and patriotically I hope, by all the means that legislation may afford. If all should fail, and you break and scatter the Constitution to the winds, I hope our reason, our courage, our patriotism will remain. But why will you not pause ? If you have power, show us that it is a power to do right and not inflict wrongs. Injuries from enemies are oftentimes forgiven, but when my brother tramples upon my heart, the separation is eternal.

I will say but little about slavery. Like most of those religious questions that have disturbed the world, all may talk about it, but none can settle it ; and for this very reason it is the more dangerous. *Uncertainty* begets superstition and fanaticism—which are dark, boundless, and terrible, capable of all things—of this we have eminent examples in history.

It is written that the followers of Mahomet caught the water with which he washed, *licked* up the spittle that he spat, and gathered every hair that fell from his head. Charles V., of Germany, kissed the feet of the Pope who had been his prisoner. The monks of St. Dennis expelled the celebrated Abelard, because he would not believe that St. Dennis, after having been beheaded, caught up his head and walked away with it. Pope Calixtus III., (in the fifteenth century,) directed the thunders of the Church against a comet, which he supposed had aided the Turks in a late battle against the Christians.

A time was when the power of Spain threatened to subjugate the world. Her monarch became a *conscience party*—civil war ensued—one hundred thousand gallant men were exiled ; eighteen thousand more perished by the inquisition and the gibbet, for opinion's sake, about a question, the truth of which, the world is yet in ignorance. From that hour Spanish glory faded, and not from the conquest of Mexico, as has been erroneously argued by the gentleman from Massachusetts, (Mr. ASHMUN.) Superstition got up the Crusades—hurled Europe upon Asia, inflicting countless calamities upon the inhabitants of both continents—showing that Christianity itself is not a blessing but a curse, when forced upon unwilling nations by legislation or the sword.

You had as well speak to the ocean as argue with fanatics. I do not speak with a hope of convincing them, but to define my own course. It has been said that *slavery is a "doomed institution ;"* and so I believe—"doomed" to exist forever. It is one of the oldest institutions among men. In every age, in every clime, it has been practiced and sanctioned by mankind, whether acting upon the light of nature or of revelation. Indeed, among men, Christianity itself has not so many evidences in its favor—a small part of mankind have been Christians, while the practice of slavery has been universal. Solon and Lycurgus are known to us by the fame of their legislation: they made no laws against slavery. Greece and Rome, the most distinguished and civilized of ancient nations, were slaveholders. Our Constitution, the work of our fathers, recognizes

it. Our Savior stood upon the world amid slaves, where the master had power over the life of the servant—he did not rebuke it or denounce it as a crime. And I trust that I will be pardoned for resting my conscience upon these high authorities, and for declining to commit it to the keeping of these modern free-soil saints, who have so much trouble in *keeping their own*.

There is one other consideration which, with me, would be conclusive of itself. I hold that the prosperity and happiness of a people are the best evidences of their virtue. With the possession of slaves, the progress of this country has been onward and upward, with a power so mighty and a flight so rapid as to leave no doubt upon my mind but that the approving smiles of an overruling Providence have rested upon us. This fact alone, with sensible men, should outweigh all the sophistry of mere theorists. It stands out upon the dark wave of speculation and fanaticism, a mighty rock of common reason, upon which the mind may repose in peace, security, and sunshine.

Sir, I have no use for that patriotism which is purer than our fathers'; that wisdom which rises above the Constitution, or that hypocrisy which affects to be more holy than Christ himself. We all know there is a way of saying one thing and doing another—of setting the features to the semblance of virtue, while deep corruption and black hypocrisy pervade the *soul*.

We are told that England and all the civilized world are against slavery. The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MANN) has given us a glowing description of the "progress" of our runaway slaves in England, and the "*princely attentions*" paid them by British lords and ladies. That England should do this, is what I should expect; but that any man in this country should be fool enough, or knave enough to applaud her conduct, is humiliating indeed—England, where all are politically unequal; where the lords sit beneath the throne upon the people, still tower down, all shorn of their rights to decorate the Crown. I remember she called our brothers of Massachusetts rebels, in 1776. We, the people of the South, helped to prove the falsehood on her; and now, in vengeance, she is truly the mother of abolitionism—she has sent forth her emissaries to plant this dark spirit in the bosom of our country, which she fondly hopes, sooner or later, may rend this glorious Confederacy into atoms. Sir, I am not willing to be judged by England, or by kings and princes; the time has come when we are to be the judges of them, and not they of us. The genius of our institutions is in conflict with theirs. The struggle has commenced; that they will abuse, is a matter of course, and I suppose the peculiar organization of certain gentlemen is a full apology for the conduct. Some minds, like rivers confined by nature to narrow channels, when swollen out their banks by an accidental rise, collect and bear along upon their muddy currents all that is despicable and filthy in the land. Such men, and such minds, aided England in the days of the Revolution; held out blue-lights to her in 1812, and it would be strange not to find them aiding her now.

It is said that the laws of Mexico are in force in California, and that slavery is thus excluded. I am not of that opinion, nor do I care for a learned argument to dispose of this question—a little common sense is better. I assume, if any are in force, they all must be—and this would

give us the Catholic Church as the established religion, and the slavery called peonage—consequences which none will admit, and which I see no way of avoiding, unless they are destroyed by the operation of “that higher law,” the *conscience of Free-Soilers*. The cases of California and Texas are different; we treated with Texas as an equal, and admitted her into the Union with all her rights and laws, not inconsistent with the Constitution. With California we made no contract; we purchased the territory from Mexico—we bought neither law, religion, nor citizens—it was simply land, and nothing more.

It is true, we agreed to admit certain persons as citizens upon the happening of certain events; but this agreement did not of itself make them citizens, for the contingency might never occur; and until it did occur, they were no more citizens than the Indians upon the lands sold to the United States, an act of Congress being as necessary to citizenize the one as the other. We imposed no yoke upon them—we did not force them to become citizens. So that the rule, that when nations are subjugated, their laws shall be in force until altered by their conquerors, has no bearing on this case. Having, then, acquired California, simply as property, slavery was neither enacted nor abolished therein—it became the joint property of the people of this Republic, upon which each of its proprietors might lawfully enter with his peculiarity. A joint title in all laws gives the right to a joint possession and enjoyment, independent of person, habits, or occupation. The slaveholder must come with his slave, and the northern man with his manufactures—the one may think it a misfortune to have acquired property jointly with the other, but that opinion of his will not give him title to the whole. The only remedy is partition. This we propose.

And here you meet us with the Wilmot proviso. Other gentlemen on this side of the House have shown its unconstitutionality. I will add nothing to the legal argument. I will measure it by the rule of common justice. If Congress had the power, it would be wrong to enact it, and a poor return for the blood of southern men shed for these territories. It is true you very generously concede to us all the glory of the “plunder and conquest,” and the record does show that we furnished many of the soldiers that acquired it. Yet you say that our half would be ruined, that you must have it all; that our opinions are worthless and yours must prevail; and you are a mighty people, *honest and conscientious*.

Now, Mr. Chairman, if this is not modesty and fairness, it is at least chivalry, and without a southern parallel. But I do not desire to insult any man; I wish to reason with all. You have no need of the proviso. If it be true, as argued by the ablest statesmen of the North, that the law of God has excluded slavery from the territories, or if it be true as asserted by Free-soilers, that communities where all are free are much more enterprising, powerful, and happy, than those where African slavery exists, then you will never need it, all history proving that a powerful and prosperous community, in close contact with one less so, will triumph over and destroy the latter, as surely as the white does the Indian. If this be our fate, we will submit; we will not ask Congress to legislate to propagate our institutions; but we want no proscription—do you? This is a great era—we should beware of the tricks of dwarfs, the follies of age, and especially of spirits not American. In prescribing

limits to African slavery, it is well to see that we do not prescribe the Republic. The North may yet want Cuba as a market for her manufactures. The South may need Canada as a purchaser of her produce. The ambitious, the patriotic, may yet cherish in their bosoms the vision of an ocean-bound republic, rising from this vast continent above the nations in peerless grandeur. Sir, I predict nothing. The future will unfold itself. But I do believe that we have a great, a magnificent country, whose destiny, like the sun, will be onward and heavenward through time. With me, the melancholy experience of the past has no place among the mighty hopes that cluster around us. If we are not false to our destiny, imperishable glory and boundless renown is ours. And for this purpose, I want all the country, the East and the West, the North and the South. It takes it all to make a great country. You of the North and East have capital, commerce, and manufactures; we of the South and West have agriculture and arms. We have much need of you, and you, perhaps, more need of us. You now can out-trade the world, and the future will show, that we can whip the "rest of mankind." This is my section, a section in the world and not on a continent. This last would be a little business for a great people. I make these suggestions, hoping that gentlemen may find in their contemplation as much pleasure as I have in considering the Wilmot Proviso. That this measure, with all of its supporters, will go down in disgrace I have no doubt—such men as affect to be its leaders would ruin a better cause. Their present seeming importance should mislead no one as to their ultimate destiny. History tells that there once lived a prince, who was king of the assassins, whose diabolical deeds made all the world for a time tremble. That prince is now only known to us by his infamy; and such will be the fate of the miserable agitators who are now urging on two great communities to bloodshed and war.

It is our duty, sir, to settle this question. We must settle it, if we would save the Republic. If northern Whiggery (and the President) will aid us, I am willing that they shall share the honor; but if they stand off for party purposes, there will be no southern Whiggery hereafter. But few words are necessary to understand each other. To admit California as she now is, would, in my opinion, be to do a thing wrong in itself, and to make a bad precedent, which in future times may bring some great calamity upon us. It is always safe to follow the law, and dangerous to tread unknown paths; and this is all the argument that any need use who vote against her admission. No man contends that she has come here in the usual constitutional mode. There is not a single fact of which we have legal proof—we are asked to act upon presumption, hearsay, and belief. I object to her boundary, and the mode of her coming; yet I may, perhaps, vote for her admission, provided governments for the territories are formed at the same time, neither enacting nor abolishing slavery therein, but submitting that question to God and the people who may settle them. I know no higher tribunals than these—Saint SEWARD and certain other Saints on this floor to the contrary notwithstanding. If you refuse this, I warn you that the business of bringing in California may be yours—not mine. I shall offer her a territorial government with the other territories—a thing which Congress ought long since to have given. I know that northern whiggery and free-soil-

ism have said, "no more slave States—no more slave territories—better disunion, better civil war, better anything that God in his providence may send, than an extension of the bounds of slavery." Confine it, and, like the cancer that is tending to the heart, it must be eradicated, or it will eat out the vitals." These quotations are from two speeches, but it is the policy of all.

Now, suppose the South and West should say to the East, your system is wrong, we are "conscientious." You wring from our free white brothers and sisters of the North far more toil than we exact from our slaves. You work "barve men and fair women" twelve hours each day, with four holidays in the year; and lamps not lit on Saturday. This system looks to immortal men and women, as to the iron and soulless spindle, only to count the cost of more—it not only "unmans a man," but it unmans the women and the Republic—our heroes will not be found of the servants of Abbot Lawrence, nor our defenders come from the walls of manufactories—our people are like our eagle, who, to be strong, must be free; caged in cities, his spirit droops and dies. We will draw a line of legislation around your cities, your manufactories, and your homes—we will confine you in a narrow circle, until you shall be glad to abandon all that you now hold dear. Would this not be a bold aggression upon your rights, which, if persisted in, would lead to civil war? Would we not be the enemies of the Republic, by attempting to destroy a large amount of property which constitutes part of our national power?

But you want our slaves to be free and our equals, and have votes. Does any one, north or south, even the most distinguished Free-soil saint, suppose that we can consent to this? They surely would not have us do it if we would, and they could prevent us. We know our slaves are not capable of self-government. We prefer to trust our northern brethren, who have won the title of "the free and brave" on so many fields. Three millions of slaves turned loose among us, would be fit instruments to make us all slaves. Gentlemen complain that they are now partially represented by white men in Congress, and I answer that they would then be fully represented by negroes—and even now it seems that we, it is, who ought to complain. I see no reason why a negro south, ought not to count as much as a *negro* north—and it does seem strange, that gentlemen holding places here by negro votes, should complain that others were here by negro laws.

But it is not worth while to reason upon this subject while the southern heart is as it is. For the negroes as slaves, we care for them. If they were absent, we perhaps might not lament; but sooner than have them turned loose among us, to be our equals, to disgust us by their vices, insult us by their insolence, to degrade our name and our posterity by a vile commingling of races, we would pray to God that the ocean's wave might blot us from the world—yea, gladly accept the glories of the past, and hope for us no future might be written. I am ready for war, subjugation, or extinction—for all the evils that have ever befallen man, rather than this; and if I believed the people of my State, either now or in time to come, would basely submit to be thus degraded, I would this hour leave her, and seek elsewhere, a race more noble, with which to cast my destiny. But she will not, she cannot.

From the report of the Comptroller of the State, it appears that in 1849—

Her lands taxed were valued at \$77,830,788

Her slaves taxed were valued at \$51,377,630

But slaves under twelve years and over fifty, are not taxed.

By the census of 1840, Tennessee had 81,481 slaves under ten

years; adding an average number for those between ten and

twelve, I estimate the slaves not taxed to be worth . . . \$19,000,000

Which gives a slave property for Tennessee of . . . \$70,000,000

Only seven millions less than the value of all our lands. This is what Tennessee is asked to give, sooner or later, to ease the conscience of Saint Seward, Saint Mann, and their fellow-saints. But other States are asked to give far greater sums. And I have made a statement, from the census of 1840, of the population of nine of the slaves States, from which they, and others, can easily tell the amount they have to give, and the condition they are in :

Alabama.....	{ Whites, 331,855
	{ Slaves, 253,532
Georgia.....	{ Whites, 407,695
	{ Slaves, 280,944
North Carolina.....	{ Whites, 484,870
	{ Slaves, 245,817
South Carolina.....	{ Whites, 259,184
	{ Slaves, 327,038
Virginia.....	{ Whites, 740,968
	{ Slaves, 448,987
Mississippi.....	{ Whites, 179,074
	{ Slaves, 195,211
Louisiana.....	{ Whites, 158,457
	{ Slaves, 168,442
Kentucky.....	{ Whites, 590,253
	{ Slaves, 182,258
Tennessee.....	{ Whites, 640,627
	{ Slaves, 183,059

It is seen that in Mississippi, Louisiana, and South Carolina, the slaves are a majority; if liberated they would elect Congressmen; and instead of the pure white blood which now sits here, we would have over on that side of the House some twenty or thirty shining darkies, sending forth their odoriferous fragrance to gladden the olfactories of God's "peculiar saints" from Massachusetts and Ohio, while their southern white brethren would be ground down into hopeless infamy and ruin; their wives and daughters the victims of negro brutality. Let those who hope to accomplish this end attempt it; and should we prove base enough to sit in cowardice and silence, our revolutionary heroes that slumber will rise from the grave; our rocks and mountains mutter forth their vengeance.

De Tocqueville, the French writer upon Democracy, says :

"Those who hope that Europeans will ever mix with negroes appear to me to delude themselves."

"Hitherto, wherever the whites have been the most powerful, they have maintained the blacks in a subordinate or servile position; wherever the negroes have been strongest, they have destroyed the whites."

And this is the true issue that abolition and the *Wilmot proviso* presents us: Shall the white race in the South be destroyed, or the negroes continue slaves?

Upon this issue northern Whigery stands up in a dark column to do battle for the negroes, and against their white brethren; and I regret to say that we find upon this floor a few gentlemen calling themselves Democrats, who are following their example.*

They are no Democrats for me, and can never get my vote for anything until they have repented, and turned from the error of their ways.

To conclude my views upon this point I would say, that we were always freemen, and never declared our liberty, but our Independence, which means simply freedom from British rule; that our Revolution was not prosecuted to change the social, moral or civil condition of the people of these colonies, but to transfer their allegiance from the English Crown to themselves. Our declaration was the declaration of a free white race for themselves. It left the negro where it found him, to his destiny with his master. One of the charges against our sovereign was, that he had endeavored to excite our slaves to rebellion, as the gentlemen from Massachusetts and Ohio now do.

But another greater cause was this. We were the colonies of Great Britain—that is, the inhabitants of her territories. We were no part of the kingdom—were not represented in Parliament; they asserted the right to legislate for us; we denied it because not represented. Our people on our territories are our colonists. When we make laws for them they are not their laws. They are not represented here. We assert over them a right, for the claiming of which by Great Britain, all the blood of the Revolution was shed. Sir, I want our colonists upon our territories to have the same rights which we claimed from Great Britain. If they want slavery let them have it. If they abolish it let them do it. They need no St. Joshua, St. Joseph, St. Horace, St. Seward, or any other saint or usurping Congress, to guide their consciences or control their actions.

*Mr. WILLIAMS, a Whig member from Tennessee, in his speech in the House on the 18th of March, 1850, said:

"I have heard several members on the other side of the House declare their willingness to trample under foot the Wilmot Proviso, and so to quiet the public mind; and I am also informed, from a reliable source, that there are twenty Democrats, members from the free States, willing to risk their popularity, and settle the question on the terms demanded by the South two years ago. I honor them both for their patriotism and their courage. *It has been my boast that I had ever belonged to the great conservative party of this Union—to the Whig party.* It is a mortifying fact to me, that up to this hour, no Whig in the House of Representatives has yet avowed, in his place, his determination to follow the self-sacrificing example that has been set on the other side. *I have ever believed that the Whig party was the great conservative party of the Union.* The hour of trial is upon us, and if that great party should now fail of its duty, and should not come up to the just expectations of the country, I am for a dissolution, not of the Union, but of the Whig party."